

TO

HENRY HUNT, Esq.

OF MIDDLETON IN THE COUNTY OF  
SOUTHAMPTON.

LETTER II.

*On the Scheme for putting forward  
Mr. Roger O'Connor as a Mem-  
ber for Westminster. — On the  
Questions to be put to Sir Francis  
Burdett at the next Election.*

North Hampstead, Long Island,

October 30, 1817.

MY DEAR HUNT,

The scheme of thrusting Mr. Roger O'CONNOR upon the City of Westminster may possibly have no real existence. I have, however, read of the thing in the public papers. I have seen, that such a project has entered the mind of somebody; and that the thought has not only found its way into words, but also into print. Before it could travel thus far, the thought must have been something more than casual. Something more than a mere start of the mind. It must have been serious. There must have been time for reflection. Some one must have put the thought into writing. The writing must have been conveyed to the press. In

short, though it is possible, that some hair-brained fool has started the thing, my belief is, that its origin has been this: Mr. O'CONNOR, having escaped from the dealers in human blood this time, would naturally suppose, that the bloody league would finally succeed by some means or other, or, at least, that there was no security for his personal freedom. This could not fail to be seen also by his friend, Sir FRANCIS BURDETT. Mr. O'CONNOR would talk of going to America; and, that he did so talk is proved by his having written to a friend here, that it was his intention to take this step; and I know, that he has done this, because his letter, to that effect, has been published here. There was one other way of securing his body from a dungeon; and, that was by obtaining a seat in parliament. To obtain a seat in parliament, there were two ways; one by money, and this was, of course, not to be thought of by a gentleman, who, though the owner of a good estate, was unable to pay Sir Francis the 500 pounds, which the latter came to the trial to prove that he had written for, and which five hundred pounds appeared by Mr. O'CONNOR's honourable acknow-

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ledgement to be a thousand pounds. There remained only one other way of obtaining a seat, and that was by getting the City of Westminster to elect Mr. O'CONNOR in the room of my LORD COCHRANE, in the event of the latter going to South America and resigning his seat; or, in case he should be compelled to leave his seat by the death of his father, and by his own consequent elevation to the Peerage. Hence, in my opinion, the *origin* of the thought. At any rate, it is very certain, that, whoever conceived the thought, the foundation of it must have been a *reliance* on the power of SIR FRANCIS to give success to the project.

The People of Westminster have never had any connection with Mr. O'CONNOR. They know nothing of the political principles of Mr. O'CONNOR. Neither they nor any part of the nation have ever heard of any thing *done*, or *said*, by Mr. O'CONNOR in the cause of Reform. Mr. O'CONNOR may be, and, I believe, is, a very worthy man, and I know that he has been dreadfully persecuted by Corruption. But, thousands have the same recommendations, without ever being thought of for Members for Westminster. Allowing Mr. O'CONNOR, as I do, to be not only innocent of the crime laid to his charge; allowing him to be a man of great talents, and he may be such for any thing that I know to the contrary; allowing him to possess the greatest

ardour in the cause of Reform, though it has not publicly appeared; allowing all this, the People of Westminster and the Reformers in general know no more of him than the People of Coventry, or any other public-spirited men, knew of COLONEL MAINE, the gentleman who missed being a maker of laws merely by taking one stage-coach for another and by the falling into too profound a sleep.

If, indeed, Westminster had a seat wherewith to shelter *every man*, who is in imminent danger of one of Corruption's dungeons, I should then say, that Mr. O'CONNOR might have one of those protecting seats as well as Sir FRANCIS BURDETT; but, having but *two* seats, those two ought to be filled by men, not only of great and known talent and of good and known principles, but also, of well-known *industry*, *perseverance*, and *resolution*; for, without these, great talent and good principles are, as dear bought experience has taught us, not only of no benefit to the People, but injurious to the People, by exciting false hopes, false reliance, and by eventually leaving the People to the mercy of Corruption, without a single effort in their defence.

But, besides this negative objection to Mr. O'CONNOR, as a Member for Westminster, there is, with me, a positive objection. Mr. O'CONNOR adheres, to this day, to his notions of *kingship*. He is, it seems, descended from



the ancient kings of CONNAUGHT in Ireland, to which title he still puts forward a claim, and, as the public has often seen with feelings of disgust hardly kept down by those of pity, he signs his name, "O'CONNOR", and not *Roger O'Connor*, as an ordinary *subject*, or *citizen*, would. He is continually harping upon the *usurpation* of England over Ireland. Why, at this rate, there is a similar *usurpation* over *Scotland*, over *Wales*, over the *Isle of Wight*, and so on, over *Durham* and *Cornwall*; for they had, at one time, separate governments, and each had its little barbarous ruffian, called a *king*. For my part, I look upon Irishmen as my countrymen as much as I so look upon my townsmen of Farnham in Surrey. I know, that Ireland has been most cruelly and insolently treated; I have always abhorred, and expressed my abhorrence of, that treatment; but, I equally abhor all the notions of *separation* which some Irishmen foolishly or wickedly entertain. It is necessary that all the parts of the kingdom should form but one whole, in order that the independence and the power and the renown of the whole should be maintained; and, as I would heartily join in approving of the most severe punishments being inflicted on any body, who should endeavour to separate Scotland or Wales from England, so would I join in approving of like punishments being inflicted on any body, who should endeavour to separate

England from Ireland. I do, by no means, wish to insinuate, that Mr. O'Connor has, or ever has had, any such views. But, it is, then, very indiscreet; it is indulging vanity to an enormous extent, to keep up these ridiculous pretensions to *kingship*; and, it would be ten thousand times more ridiculous in the Reformers of Westminster to think, for one moment, of giving their countenance to this species of wild and obsolete *Legitimacy*. If we are to choose the king of *Connaught*, we shall by and by have more kings start up. We shall have kings as plenty as taxgatherers. I shall begin to trace backward the branches of my own genealogical tree. Who knows but I may have sprung from some petty marauder, who lived without work from being able to keep in awe a circle of less bold and more conscientious and industrious savages? No: we want not a multitude of Royal Families: the one Royal Family that we have is quite enough to satisfy any nation not destitute of all conscience.

The People of Westminster had a hard and long struggle before they succeeded in freeing themselves from the chains of the aristocracy. Before this struggle, which was made by Mr. PAUL, most heartily backed by me and by many men of great zeal and great talent too, the People of that City had really no more to do in the choosing of their Members, than have the People of Winchel-

sea and Bramber in the choosing of Messrs. Brougham and Wilberforce. Pitt's party put in one Member, and Fox's party put in the other; and, both parties hated all thought of any thing resembling a real election. The affair was settled at a joint meeting of the two factions, as thieves make a division of their booty; and a Westminster Election was become one of the most contemptible of all exhibitions.

When Mr. Fox died, as the seat belonged to the Whig faction, the Whigs prepared to put SHERIDAN in his place. But, public opinion had received a great *stir*, and the habit of calling *Meetings* was much in vogue. SHERIDAN, eager to get seated for Westminster, made his appearance at the Crown and Anchor, *cried* most melodiously, while his auditory laughed ready to split, and he most solemnly declared, that his only ambition was to succeed his great friend now no more. His tears were in vain. The Duke of Northumberland, who supported the Whig Party with *seven tongues*, all *Yeas* or *Noes*, just as he commanded, wanted the seat for his son, Earl PERCY, a name which this Duke's family has taken, though the real name is *Smithson*, and which latter name, meaning *Son of a Smith*, did not sound so much of antiquity and nobility as the name *Percy*. The Duke's *seven mouths*, all kept at his own command (for he was too noble minded to *sell* or *let* them), made

the Whig party choak off SHERIDAN, who had, as he thought, got fast hold of the seat. EARL PERCY was elected, and a great gilt chair was prepared to carry him from Covent Garden to Northumberland House, in which chair he rode amidst the hooting and hissing of the people.

There had not been time for much preparation on the part of the Reformers on this occasion; but, we now began to bestir ourselves. A series of Letters, in the Register, addressed to the People of Westminster, calling upon them to rescue themselves from this state of political degradation, and exposing the tricks, by which their suffrages had so long been converted to the obtaining of public money for their enemies; this series of Letters, together with much discussion amongst the people, prepared us pretty well for the general election, which, soon after, took place. Lord GARDNER, who had been Mr. Fox's colleague for many years, was called up to the Peers; and the PITTITES put forward Sir SAMUEL HOOD to stand for his seat at this general election. Earl PERCY again offered himself; but, we soon rang a peal in his ears, that made him scamper. Old SHERRY now saw an opening for him. The *seven mouths* of "*Duke Smithson*" (as CANNING calls him in the Anti-Jacobin Poetry) were now shut, as far as related to the Westminster seat. We opposed Mr. PAULL to SHERRY; and,



what our man wanted in point of talent and knowledge, he amply made up for in *industry* and *pluck*. He was a man of diminutive size; but what there was of him was good. He was game, every inch of him: a real game cock. Our opponents called him a *Scotch Taylor*; but, whatever else he was, he was as brave a man as ever lived. He made SHERIDAN slink like a scalded cur; and he cowed the one-armed Admiral so completely, that he hardly dared to show his face.

The return was given in favour of HOOD and SHERIDAN; but, during the struggle, as well as before and after it, the exposure of the villainies of the two factions was so complete, that they thought it prudent, when the next election came, which was in a few months, not to put forward any candidates at all. The people were, therefore, left to themselves; and, as Sir FRANCIS BURDETT had been thrown out for Middlesex, and was out of Parliament, it was resolved to bring him and Mr. PAULL in for Westminster. It was settled between these two, that this would be *agreeable to both*. But, at a public dinner at the Crown and Anchor, a few days before the election, appeared Mr. JONES BURDETT, who was authorized by his brother to declare, that his brother disclaimed all intention to be offered as a candidate *with Mr. Paull*. The precise words I do not recollect; but, they clearly

amounted to an implied *dislike to be the colleague of Mr. Paull*.

This was doing all that could be done to injure the cause of Mr. PAULL; and, it was, in spirit, at least, departing from the agreement between the parties. It had always been clearly understood by me, that Mr. PAULL was to be held up as the intended colleague of Sir FRANCIS, and that those who supported the one were to support the other. This was the basis of the *Subscription*; and, therefore, Mr. PAULL said, that the disclaiming of him was to take from him the promised support. He also imputed to the message of Sir FRANCIS BURDETT an attack on his personal character. Hence the *challenge* and the *duel*. I was, at the time, in the country, or the duel never would have taken place; for, I had great influence with Mr. PAULL, and I would have advised him so to act as to make JOHN BULL clearly see, that he had been foully treated, and then his election would have been sure. But all the mischief was done when I was called up at mid-night to hear the news; and, as all the women had pitched on upon PAULL with the names of *murderer* and *assassin*, to attempt to reason the torrent into silence would have been useless.

Mr. PAULL was *dangerously* wounded, and Sir FRANCIS received a severe wound. The dangerous state of the former made his staunch friends indifferent to

the result of the election. It appeared useless to endeavour to support him by votes. Mr. ELLIOT and my LORD COCHRANE came forward; and even Old SHERRY, emboldened by this schism, again showed his nose; which, however, he soon withdrew. The election terminated in favour of Sir FRANCIS and Lord COCHRANE; but, it was a very *languid* affair. Not a thousandth part of the interest was excited that was seen at the contest with SHERIDAN and HOOD. That was the *real struggle*; that was the *real triumph* of freedom in Westminster. We had to contend against the whole force of the Borough-faction, who had united against us in open, active, and desperate hostility. In the latter case, the whole of this faction remained perfectly neutral.

In the last case I remained at home. My LORD COCHRANE wrote to me to obtain my assistance, and he will well remember, that my answer was, that I deeply lamented, that it was now too late for me to render any assistance to Mr. PAULL; but, that, while he continued, though against my advice, to be a candidate, I was bound in honour to give my assistance, whatever it might be, *to him*. His Lordship, in reply, told me, that my answer had not at all *disappointed* him, and that my reasons had convinced him that I was acting as I ought to do. I saw Mr. PAULL on his bed where he lay nearly to the moment of his

death. "Ah!" said he, as I entered the room, "if *you* had been here, I should now have been in a *seat*, instead of being on a *bed*." And he laughed at the dull joke, though he was suffering most excruciating pain. I had never been upon terms of private intimacy with him. The notion was that I had, because one of my sons was baptised *James Paull*; but, this is the name of a worthy old friend of mine in Pennsylvania, and was given to the child before I had ever heard of Mr. JAMES PAULL, who had been introduced to me by Mr. WINDHAM in the year 1805, and with whom I never had any acquaintance, except as a *public* man. But, as such, I felt deep interest in his success; because he was a most bold and industrious assailant of my country's worst enemies; and, it has always been my opinion, that he did more real good to the country than Sir FRANCIS BURDETT has, *of himself*, ever done. I deeply lamented the fate of Mr. PAULL, and, though his struggle in Westminster cost *me* some hundreds of pounds, and though I disapproved of the *challenge* to Sir Francis, I have never spoken of the fate of the brave little man, without expressing my sorrow at it, and have never mentioned his name without endeavouring to do justice to his memory.

Now, upon a review of all the circumstances and all the acts, which produced a restoration of freedom in Westminster, and which



eventually led to the election of Sir FRANCIS BURDETT, it will appear very evident, that the City does not owe its freedom to him. Indeed, he *refused* to take the *smallest pains* in order to secure the ground which had been gained by Mr. PAULL. The expression of Mr. HORNE TOOKE was, that Sir FRANCIS should not *stand forward* at all, but that the people must elect him, "*at a rush*"; meaning that they must *rush* forward in a body and elect him at once without any effort of his. This was the ground, upon which he stood, and very fair ground it was. But, having been supported in this most honourable way, his conduct ought to be proportioned to it; and, at any rate, he has acquired no just claim to a right to *nominate* the other Member for the City. If this were the case; if he could put in any crony of his own, a Mr. O'CONNOR, a Col. MAINE, a Sir ROBERT WILSON, a Mr. BROUGHAM; or any other person, no matter who, I can see nothing that has been gained by all the exertion, which we made in Westminster. During the struggle of Mr. PAULL, when the Aristocracy were defeated in Westminster, there was as much public-spirit displayed as ever was beheld in the world. There were numerous men, who gave up their time, who sacrificed their obvious interests, who set at nought all private considerations, in order to insure the public good. I remember, and shall always remember, Mr. GEORGE HARRIS,

whose activity and anxiety were as great as if the fate of his very soul had depended upon the result. When I name Mr. HARRIS, however, I only name him as one amongst scores; and, it is this public-spirit, this ardour which forgets all about *self*; it is my long observation of this, in so many of my countrymen, that has, more than all other things, endeared them and my country to me.

What! was all this exertion to be made, in order to rescue this City from the hands of the Aristocracy; and is it now to become the close borough of a single man? We complain of the mockery of elections, where a corporation or any other dozen or two of men, choose the Members; but, what better will Westminster be, if a little Club, or Committee, can carry on the same sort of farce?

Besides, there are the *principles* now to be considered. We know well, that Sir FRANCIS BURDETT was elected upon the ground, that he was opposed to *both the trading factions*. He called them *the Regiment*; he described Mr. WHITBREAD as being in the Regiment; and he truly so described him. Sir Francis has a thousand times declared, that the *factions* were equally hostile to the freedom of the people. And well he might, seeing that both factions have a share in the Boroughs and in the Pensions and Sinecure Places. He declared, that the two factions must be rooted out; that the

leaves must be torn out of the accursed Red Book; that the two factions must be put down. These were the principles upon which he was elected. But, we now find him taking a *decided* part with *one* of the two factions. We find him exchanging the appellation of "*honourable friend*" with the sons and the notorious tools of Boroughmongers; and that, too, at the very moment, that these his new *friends* are abusing and calumniating the million and a half of men, who have petitioned for a Reform of the Parliament. He was a witness, an eye and an ear witness, of the conduct of Mr. BROUGHAM at the beginning of last session. He heard him assail the petitioners in the most furious and ferocious and most cowardly manner. He heard him attack Major Cartwright's "*little remedies and big blunders*." He afterwards saw the duplicity of this man exposed from a document in his own hand writing. He saw all the proofs; the clear, the indubitable proofs of this man's insincerity, of his falseness, of his political turpitude; and yet, we since hear him, over and over again, and even *ostentatiously*, calling this same man his "*learned and honourable friend*." After this, we may expect to see him, in the language of Scripture, "*say unto* 'Corruption, thou art my father;' for, the alliance is now become so very close, that we may almost call it a *relationship*. And, when the zealous and sincere men in

Westminster, and all over the kingdom were subscribing to carry Sir Francis into Parliament; when they were exulting at this great triumph over the two factions, did it ever enter into their minds, that they should see a dinner, held for the avowed purpose of celebrating that triumph, converted into an occasion of *eulogizing one* of those factions? As to the pretence, that the whigs, or any part of them, have *come over* to Sir FRANCIS BURDETT'S principles, to shew the falsehood of this, what need have we of any proof other than the fact, that the very men, who were eulogized by Sir Francis at this dinner, hold in *derision*, and *openly deride*, the prayer of the People for ANNUAL PARLIAMENTS. As to the *extent of suffrage*, whether it should, as we pray, go the full length of the Duke of Richmond's Bill, or whether it should stop at *householders*; will any one man of the new "*honourable friends*" distinctly pledge himself to either? So far from it, that they, one and all, reprobate the idea as *wild, visionary, mad*, and, if not *seditionous*, most terribly *mischievous*. How, then, are they *come over*? What is it that entitles them to our champion's *praise*? What have they done to the People's cause but *harm*? It was their language, joined to his abandonment, that gagged us. It is, therefore, an instance of superlative impudence in any one to pretend, that this faction, or any part of it, has *come*



over to Sir FRANCIS BURDETT. No: it is he, who has, as far as any movement has taken place, *gone over to their principles and their views*; and, though he may flatter himself, that he is at the head of a small detachment of the Whig faction, they will know, that he is now only *their underling*.

Instead of quietly and silently, like a set of borough-slaves, submitting to choose a second Member at the dictation of Sir Francis Burdett, the People of Westminster will have a right, and they will be called upon by a sense of duty, to inquire, whether *he himself* has a fair claim to be re-chosen. There are matters to be cleared up, which must be cleared up, before he can be re-chosen for Westminster, unless the People of that City are become destitute of all their spirit and their good sense. I, for one, if I am present, will certainly oppose his re-election, unless he come forward and distinctly pledge himself to move for leave to bring in a Bill for a Reform of the Parliament upon the principles of *Annual Elections* and a right of voting *co-extensive with taxation*, and restricted only by the natural disqualifications of sex or of non-age, and by those of insanity and criminal infamy. I hope, that the People of Westminster will never leave any thing *doubtful* upon these points again.

As to *annual parliaments*, he himself does not pretend to have any doubt; and, indeed, the existence of these in former times has

been so clearly proved as to leave no room for doubt. DEAN SWIFT talks of the right of annual parliaments as a thing of which no man had ever doubted. SAMUEL JOHNSTON (not the Dictionary Pensioner) has *proved* the right and the practice beyond all question. MILTON, Mr. Baron MASERES, the late Duke of RICHMOND, and many others, not to mention Major CARTWRIGHT, Mr. FAWKES, and many men, who are now active, have all given the proofs, over and over again. Yet this was one of the "*big blunders*," at which Sir Francis's honourable and most impudent friend, Mr. Brougham, affected to laugh.

The extent of the suffrage ought to be *co-extensive with taxation*, because the very essence, the vital principle, of the Constitution is, that *no man shall be taxed without his own consent*. If, indeed, the taxes are taken off from the beer, the malt, the hops, the tobacco, the sugar, the tea, the candles, the spirits, the soap, the leather, the salt, the pepper, the iron, the steel, the drugs, the post-letters, &c. then the mass of the People may, with some shew of justice, be denied the right of voting. But, there would, even then, remain a tax, and a most weighty tax too: I mean the *Militia Service* and other *compulsory military and naval service*. Take all these off; leave Sir Francis's "*men of property*;" leave his "*gentlemen of the country*," to pay all the taxes now raised in money,

and to perform the Militia and Sailor's service themselves; and then I agree, that the mass of the People will have less evident grounds for the assertion of their right to vote.

But, it will remain for Sir Francis to explain to the People in Palace Yard, or Covent Garden, upon *what principles* he has wished to deny the right of voting to a very large part of those, who pay almost the whole of the taxes. If we look at the amount of the taxed articles, above enumerated, and at the portion of that amount, which consists of *tax*, we shall see, that every Journeyman or Labourer pays in taxes more than the amount of one half of his wages, that is to say, of the income from his property, which property consists in his labour. Upon *what principle* is it, then, that Sir Francis would deny to this man the right of voting? The man is not a *house-holder*. But what signifies that? He *pays the taxes*. Must a man be *married*, in order to have a right to vote, and that, too, at a time, when the schemers are at work to *prevent* people from marrying? If the Journeyman, or Labourer, pay so large a portion of the taxes, upon *what principle*, I ask, is it that Sir Francis would deny him the right of voting? I should like to *hear* this principle explained.

I know, that Sir Francis will say, because he has said, that the *Journeyman* and *Labourer* pay no taxes; and that, as the

taxes come out of their *wages*, and the wages come from the master, or farmer, it is the master, or farmer, who pays the taxes, and not the Journeyman or Labourer. Now, then, if this be the case, it is the farmer who pays the taxes of Sir Francis himself, for the taxes of the latter come out of *rent*, and the rent comes from the farmer. Nay, the farmer pays no taxes; for, as his taxes come out of the money that he receives for his corn and his meat, and as this money comes from the Miller and Butcher, the Miller and the Butcher pay all the farmer's taxes. No, faith, for they get the amount of the taxes in the price of the flour and meat that they sell; so that it is the Journeyman and Labourer, and others, who eat the flour and meat that pay the taxes at last. Into this endless round of folly would the argument of Sir Francis lead us. The true principle is, that, be the tax of what nature it may, every man in the country really pays a part of the tax in proportion to the quantity of taxed matter which he *consumes*, or *uses* for his own private purposes; and, as the poor man consumes, *in proportion to his income*, a much larger quantity of this taxed matter than the rich man consumes, the poor man is *much more heavily taxed than the rich man*. Thus is this favourite doctrine blown into air.

But, if this doctrine were as true as it is false, how would it benefit Sir Francis in his project for ex-



tending the right of voting to householders, and stopping there? If a Journeyman, or Labourer, who is *not* a householder, pays no taxes, he who is a householder pays no taxes, unless he inhabit a house with five or six windows. Upon *what principle*, then, is he to have a vote, while the man who is *not* a householder is deprived of that privilege? In short, this *householder* project is too flagrant in absurdity to deserve further notice. It is a perfect novelty in the science of politics; but of so low a character as to merit no appellation higher than that of a riddle.

However, we are not yet come to the close of the arguments, on which the People's right to *Universal Suffrage* rests. And here let me observe, once for all, that by *Universal Suffrage*, we have never meant, that there should be *no exceptions*; we have never meant, that *every person* should vote. Women are by the nature of their situation in life and of their character, disqualified, as they are in the cases of military and naval service. Women, from their feminine offices and properties are so disqualified. It is a mere *shuffle*, therefore, to pretend, that, if our Reform be adopted, it would be *unjust* to exclude women. The law makes a husband answerable in his estate and in his person, for all debts and all trespasses of his wife. The law calls upon *all the king's subjects* to take up arms, in certain cases, in

defence of his dominions, but, though *all the king's subjects* include women, women are not meant so to be included by the law. Women, by law, cannot be Members of Parliament; they cannot be Priests or Bishops; they cannot be Counsellors or Judges; they cannot be Officers by land or sea. The law, by its meaning, or, as the lawyers call it, by its *intendment*, excludes them, though it says nothing about them. It is, therefore, mere *ca-villing* to pretend, that we do not mean what we say, when we talk of *Universal Suffrage*. *Insane persons* cannot be permitted to vote, because the law does not allow them to do either good or harm. Their engagements are void, and they can suffer for no crime however heinous its nature. Men deemed *infamous* by the law, and whose oaths pass for nothing, must also be excluded. *Infants* are excluded, because the law does not bind them in any civil contract. But, with these exceptions, where the disqualification is so obviously just, and so consonant with all the principles and practices of law, all persons ought to vote; and this extension of the Suffrage is quite sufficient to justify the epithet *Universal*; though Sir Francis never saw, I believe, in the *Bill*, which he was to present, this word *Universal*. The drawer up of that Bill knew well how to express the legal meaning of it. In short, the word *Universal* is made use of as the best single

word which presents itself; as Sir Francis uses the word *Boroughmongering* before *Parliament*; for there are *exceptions* here. *He* is not put in by *Boroughmongers*; but, if upon all such occasions, we were to go into exceptions, our discourse and our writings would become so encumbered, that nobody would long have patience to listen to the former, or to read the latter. So that this cavil at mere words is, and can be, nothing more than a pretext for shuffling out of the thing which is well known to be understood. But, in order to put an end to all doubts on this subject, why did Sir Francis not propose *the Bill*. The Bill would have spoken for itself. It would have shown, that the Reformers, with their able and venerable Leader at their head, contemplated neither "*little Remedies*" nor *big Blunders*;" but, that they well knew what they meant, and well knew how to express their meaning. Sir Francis Burdett, and all the rest of us, have long talked of a *Reform of Parliament*; but, we mean a Reform of the *Commons' House* only. So that, the whole cause may be cavilled at upon this ground, because we "*do not mean what we say*." This criticism reminds one of the *learned washer-woman*, who, when, presiding at the tea-table, being asked by another to give her *a cup*, gave her the *empty cup*, observing that she had not asked for any *tea*.

Thus, then, let us hope to escape carping at words and syllables in future, though it is extremely difficult to make those understand, who are resolved not to act upon the thing to be understood. As none are so blind as those who do not wish to see, so none are so dull as those who do not wish to understand. There was an Officer in the 54th Regiment, who, when out on a Piquet, mistook a string of farmers, at *three miles distance*, for a whole regiment of American Cavalry, and retreated with his Piquet accordingly. The general (Garth) asked him how he came to make such a mistake, and his answer was that he was *near-sighted*. "Let me beg of you, then," said the General, "not to *strain* your eyes another time, but to wait till the object approaches you." This was a remarkable instance of the effects of a defect in the faculty of seeing; though, in another instance, the same officer could not see, at the distance of a hundred yards, a foraging party that he was ordered to pursue. There is no accounting for such out-of-the-way caprices of the senses and the faculties; but, let us hope, that, for the future, it will be clearly understood what we *mean* by the two words *Universal Suffrage*.

Well, then, it will require to be explained by Sir FRANCIS, upon *what principle*, whether of law, reason, or justice, he can deny this right to the people, while they are all liable to be compelled to take up



arms and to fight in defence of the country at the hazard of their lives. He knows well, that all Journey-men and Labourers, whether single or married, whether non-householders or house-holders, are liable to be so compelled, and that they really are so compelled. He may, notwithstanding what has been said, still insist that the Journey-men and Labourers *pay no taxes*; but, he will hardly insist that they *carry no muskets*, and *shed no blood*! He will hardly pretend, that it is the *masters and farmers*, and the "*gentlemen of the Country*," who, at bottom, really carry the arms, and that it is *their blood*, which runs through the holes made in the coats of the soldiers and in the jackets of the sailors! It will demand something beyond even the logic of HUDIBRAS to make out this doctrine. Well, then, if it be the real bodies and blood of the People, without any distinction of householder and non-householder, which are verily and indeed compelled by law to expose themselves in defence of the country, *upon what principle* will Sir Francis defend his wish to shut out more than one half of them from the right of voting? I should like to have a distinct answer to this question; and, distinct, indeed, it must be, if given at all, for there is no possibility of evading or blinking the question.

In fact, the only answer must be, that the mass of the people were born and live for the benefit

and honour of a few; that these few have a right, by birth or by wealth, to compel the many to shed their blood for them; and that the many ought, in fact, to be considered in no light higher than that of dogs in a kennel, or cattle upon a farm. Great craft and profound hypocrisy may be able to produce a confusion of ideas on the subject, and to deceive the very, very credulous part of mankind; but, as Sir Francis has neither craft nor hypocrisy, this is the answer he must give, or confess that his house-holder plan is unjust as well as whimsical.

But, there is yet a body of men, whom the house-holder plan would exclude. I mean all the regular *soldiers and sailors*. These are not *house-holders*, to a certainty; and upon what principle are they to be shut out? Is it desirable for a Reformed Parliament to adopt the system of the Boroughmongers in keeping these men separate from the people; in giving them no common interests and no common feeling with the people; in doing all that can be done to make them envy and hate the people; in rendering them wholly insensible to the rights and liberties of their country? Oh, no! Sir Francis Burdett does not think this. But, what does he think, then? Why would he exclude the soldiers and sailors? They cannot be house-holders; but, are they to have no rights left them, because they have engaged to venture their

lives for their country's safety and honour? Those of our countrymen, who wear red coats and blue jackets pay, in proportion to their means, heavier taxes than the Lords and "*the Gentlemen of the Country*" pay. Their pay would afford them double the quantity of beer, sugar, tea, &c. that they now can get, if there were no taxes on these articles. Upon *what principle*, then, can they be shut out? The Duke of Richmond included Soldiers and Sailors in his proposed Reform; and, certainly, to exclude them would be unjust in the extreme.

I would demand, and it is very probable that I *shall* demand, on the hustings of Covent Garden, a distinct answer to all these questions. I see, that the Ministers are very shy of *dissolving the Parliament*; and they shall look sharp, if they act before I am ready for them. If, however, I am not at hand, I know well, that you will do your duty; I know well, that you will not be induced to remain silent, while any deception, or any humbug is going on.

There is one more subject upon which I would demand an explanation; namely, whether Sir Francis did, or did not, approve of his son's going into the *Standing Army in time of peace*, and to

serve under a *German Officer*, whom the law positively forbids to be so entrusted and employed. This, as I have before stated, is a matter of the greatest consequence; for, though I believe, that he never did approve of it, he has *never publicly said so*; and, therefore, the striking circumstance requires *explanation*. As to the abandonment of the Reformers and their cause at the beginning of the session, it requires no explanation, because it will admit of none. It requires apology, it requires confession of neglect of duty; but of explanation justificatory it admits not. This affair of the son does; and it ought to be demanded. What would be said of *you*, if one of *your* sons were seen in a German cap and jacket, muff and tippet, with big black-balled whiskers under his nose, covered with all sorts of tinsel and tapes, with a ridiculous bag and big sword at his heels, and with a pair of long crooked spurs screwed into his boot heels? I know you will say, that *you* would rather see him sweeping the streets; but, what would the *People say*? That is the question. I know that you will say, that forty Baronetcies and forty big estates would not be a compensation for such a calamity.



But, again I ask, what would the *People say*? Why, they would be slow to condemn; their justice would induce them to wait for an explanation; but, having waited for about two years, and received no explanation, they would begin to think, that you disdained their good opinion very much, that you thought yourself wholly unaccountable to them, or that your doctrines about Standing Armies were intended, like some men's sermons, for the benefit of every body but yourself. Either Sir Francis did approve of his son's entering the Standing Army in time of Peace, or he did not: if he did, he has wholly abandoned his political principles; if he did not, an explanation is *due* to the people, and, if the explanation be not given, his contempt of the people is exceeded by that of no man living. You recollect how many persons asked *me* for this explanation in November, December, and January last. You know how many doubts and surmises arose from the want of an explanation. You know, that one gentleman, formerly a warm advocate for Sir FRANCIS, declared that this had so disgusted him, that he would never again stir an inch in any cause, in which Sir FRANCIS was a chief. If he did

not approve, the explanation cannot possibly fail to do himself good, while it can do his son no harm, for the fact cannot go beyond the suspicion with regard to him; but, if Sir FRANCIS did approve, it is unmanly in itself and unjust towards the people as well as towards his own son, not to avow the approbation.

Vain is the imagination of that man, who supposes, that these questions are to be avoided by the sticking of some *delegate* upon the hustings to say, "*thus and thus saith Sir Francis.*" A delegate will not easily be found, if it be recollected how the *Meeting of Delegates* was abandoned. But, if one should be found, there must be another *Subscription*, if any man appears in *opposition*, as I trust there will. And, *who* is to subscribe? Will the Whig Lords? The very thought makes one shudder. No: though he has abandoned us, I never can wish to see Sir FRANCIS BURDETT covered with shame and infamy so great! After being elected by the means of such a subscription, I verily believe the sight of him would kill me. The People will not subscribe. They cannot be asked to subscribe. Will Sir Francis pay the expenses himself? Away, then, goes

"*Purity of Election*," like a star from the firmament. Yet, to this it must come, or, if *boldly opposed*, he will not be re-elected.

For, the day of *account* is now come. Men now look back, and ask, what has been DONE? They have heard a great deal of *talk*; but, upon summing it up, they find so many cyphers, that the *amount* is nothing. There is nothing that remains to be seen and felt. No bold and indelible records of the infamy of our persecutors; much talk about extravagant expenditure, but no well-drawn summary of the whole, no close and intelligible account of it; much talk about the Debt and Paper-money, but no distinct propositions, recorded on the journals; much talk about the plunder and the distribution of the plunder, but no manuel for the people to carry about them and to refer to; much talk about the conduct of Judges and Attornies General, but no list of distinct and undeniable charges; much

talk about impeaching CASTLE-REAGH, but no impeachment; much talk about Reform and half-a-dozen unmeaning motions for Committees, but no Bill. In short, with few exceptions, all has been *talk*; a great deal of talk against the Standing Army; and, what do we *see*? Much talk about the true-hearted Major CARTWRIGHT, while the City of Coventry is intended for Colonel MAINE.

This is the greater part of the account. This is pretty nearly the sum total of the produce of all the zeal, all the exertions and all the devotion of the people of Westminster, who, whatever the Rump of a Committee may think, are not to be made to believe that *talking* and *doing* are the same things.

With the most anxious wishes for your health, I remain,

Your faithful friend,

And most obedient servant,

WM. COBBETT.

ERROR.—In No. 2, folio 35, line 6 from the bottom; instead of *love*, read *tone*.

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